

Position Statement on TEKS Changes

After reviewing the Texas Education Agency's April 8th on-line announcement concerning changes to the ELAR and SLAR TEKS, written into rule text more than twelve months ago, the literacy organizations who have signed this statement have the following concerns.

First and foremost, the statements from TEA do not reflect our understanding of district and service center investments that have already taken place:

FISCAL IMPACT: *The TEA has determined that there are no additional costs to state or local government required to comply with the proposal;*

COST INCREASE TO REGULATED PERSONS: *The proposal does not impose a cost on regulated persons, another state agency, a special district, or a local government and, therefore, is not subject to Texas Government Code, §2001.0045.; and*

PUBLIC BENEFIT AND COST TO PERSONS: *The proposal would include additional clarification of the reading language arts standards to avoid confusion. There is no anticipated economic cost to persons who are required to comply with the proposal, are not valid.*

Most ESC's have printed the TEKS in pamphlets and professional documents, which cost a considerable amount of money. Districts have spent taxpayer dollars and possibly state dollars printing the new TEKS in their current format since the TEKS were approved as rule text **over** a year ago to train teachers to implement a new set of standards with mostly new language. Districts statewide utilized district funds to retain substitutes for teachers being trained in the adopted TEKS. Districts also secured consultants/specialists utilizing campus and district funds to ensure their teachers were well trained in the adopted TEKS. The TEKS training provided direction for school districts that develop local curriculum (scope and sequences, curriculum maps, etc). The revision of the local curriculum will cost districts work hours and dollars that would now be required due to the proposed changes. This also affects school districts that have already created curriculum, such as scope and sequence, based on the approved standards.

Another addition, adding literary nonfiction into the standards now, when the teacher workgroups did not feel the need to add them, discounts the work the teachers put into the writing of these standards. Teacher teams researched the three genre categories: literary, informational, and argument. The consistency in using these terms was thought-out and deliberate. The word **fiction** does not show up until grade 5; that does not mean that the term fiction cannot be used until grade 5. There is, in preservice teacher preparation and in current pedagogy, the knowledge base of literary genres, argument genres, and informational genres. This is something that the *TEKS Guides* from TEA could help expand and give more guidance to teachers. No change in the standards is necessary to add literary nonfiction as it is already a contemporary style of literature as well as a diverse field of work. If assessment items already in TEA's possession are driving this change, we know that STAAR and EOC are designed to measure the standards rather than standards being taught to meet the assessments. STAAR and EOC are not vetted as extensively by teams of teacher experts as the standards were. If the teams chose not to list every subgenre, then their work should be honored. District committees and personnel have spent countless hours reviewing instructional materials that complied with 100% alignment to the adopted TEKS. Many districts have made decisions regarding instructional

materials to be utilized in teaching the adopted TEKS beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. However, the TEKS aligned instructional materials will not support the revisions being proposed. Districts could be required to purchase additional materials that address the genre of literary nonfiction if said publishers did not align text to literary nonfiction as that genre was removed from the adopted TEKS and yet, the proposed revision introduces literary nonfiction in kindergarten. Intermediate teachers, specifically fifth grade, will also be required to locate and potentially purchase materials reflecting the text structures of “diaries and journals” per the proposed revisions.

Finally, the addition of a brand-new standard in the high school standards, asking students to discuss the artistic qualities of diverse texts, is duplicative. The word *diverse* appears twenty-four times from kindergarten to English IV, and it is associated with cognitive expectations such as *recognizing* and *analyzing* as well as *discussing*. If needed, this standard should have been added in the requisite comment period while on the Texas Register. The literacy organizations question the need for this addition. If this addition is to meet the new CCMR standards for state and federal compliance, why isn't there a grandfather element to help preserve repeated changes to standards? The previous TEKS were adopted into rule text on September 4th, 2008. The copyright on the last CCRS was 2009. If the 2009 standards were not revised to meet the CCRS, then why the addition of this new TEKS in high school?

While these are not the only changes proposed, they are the changes that most affect our organizations. We respectfully request that TEA make no changes to the TEKS as they are rule text, and we ask they address these changes and all other changes proposed by TEA in the TEKS guides that are forthcoming as noted in Commissioner Morath's testimony to the SBOE from last year. In his presentation to the SBOE, Commissioner Morath explained *the resources are designed to offer a deeper analysis of the standards to bridge the gap between TEKS and assessment, and will become available on a rolling basis.* (SBOE Minutes, Committee of the Full Board, January 30, 2018.) It is our request that TEA do just that and utilize the forthcoming TEKS guides to address all changes.

In summary, the TEKS need to remain as fully vetted by a broad-based coalition of stakeholders and adopted by the SBOE more than twelve months ago.

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